

# Pull Over to a Safe Place

As soon as you feel  
the first signs  
of fatigue



Québec 

# Fatigue-Impaired Driving

Driving when drowsy is a key factor in 23% of fatal accidents and 20% of all Québec road accidents from 2003 to 2006.

Sleep deprivation, like alcohol, reduces a driver's ability to perform tasks that require concentration, judgment and reflexes.

## Individual and External Factors

Individual factors such as your health, age, sleep habits, diet and level of fitness significantly affect the ability to withstand fatigue. Other external factors, such as working conditions, road conditions, weather and boredom on the road can aggravate a situation of accumulated fatigue.

For more informations:

[www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/documents/pdf/prevention/fatigue\\_alertness.html](http://www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/documents/pdf/prevention/fatigue_alertness.html)

# Risk factors

To accurately determine your level of exposure to fatigue, you need to take the following sleep-related elements into account:

## 1. The number of continuous hours of being awake

In 40% of fatigue-related accidents, the driver had been awake for more than 17 hours. **After being awake 17 hours, your physical and mental performance drops considerably and is worse than if your blood alcohol concentration is 0.05 mg/dl.** Your reaction time can be up to twice as slow and your movements less precise.

## 2. The time of the day

**The risk of falling asleep at the wheel is greatest** in the early afternoon, **between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., and at night, between 2:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.** Drowsiness episodes are eight times more likely at night than during the day. Why?

Because a person's body follows a daily cycle that contains "lulls" during which the metabolism slows down, vigilance decreases and fatigue sets in.

## 3. Sleep debt

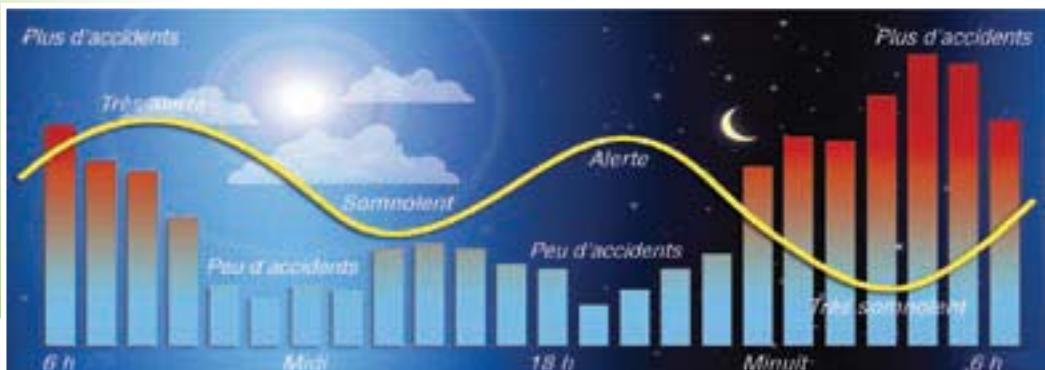
Half of the drivers involved in a fatigue-related accident had slept fewer than six hours the day before the accident. Regardless of your age, if you do not get enough sleep, you accumulate a "sleep debt." A debt of five hours has the same effect as consuming two or three glasses of wine, which is worse than having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 mg/dl. If you have a sleep debt and drink alcohol, you are literally "drunk from fatigue." **The only way to combat a sleep debt is to get enough sleep.**

## 4. Sleep disorders

The effects of fatigue increase significantly if an individual suffers from a sleep disorder. Consult a physician if you feel tired throughout the day or have difficulty sleeping at night.

## 5. Use of alcohol, medication or other drugs

The effects of fatigue are exacerbated by the use of even small amounts of alcohol, certain medications and other drugs.





## Managing your fatigue

### AT HOME:

#### ask your family members for their cooperation

- ▶ Plan a rest period long enough to have a good recuperating sleep;
- ▶ Exercise regularly; even 15 minutes a day is beneficial;
- ▶ Pay attention to what you eat: have light, low-fat meals that include a total of at least five to ten servings of fruits and vegetables per day, eat fewer sweets and less salt;
- ▶ Consult your physician for treatment of any sleep disorder.

### ON THE ROAD:

#### prevent fatigue, drowsiness and falling asleep

- ▶ Plan breaks every two hours and nap when you begin to feel drowsy;
- ▶ Plan on stopping, have a coffee or a snack, air out the cab, readjust your seat and change positions, turn on the radio... all of these tactics will give you a quick lift, though the effects last only a short time;
- ▶ Avoid driving through heavy traffic zones during a "lull" in your daily cycle;
- ▶ Avoid driving at night between 2:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., and during the day between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.;
- ▶ Slow down; driving over a given speed limit forces you to process a large amount of information quickly and requires additional visual acuity which, over time, brings on fatigue;
- ▶ Avoid visual fatigue when you drive: dim dashboard lighting, remove objects from the top of the dashboard to avoid reflections in the windshield, regularly clean the windshield and side mirrors.



**Pull over in a safe place  
as soon as you feel the  
first signs of fatigue.**

**Have a safe trip!**

# Learn to recognize the warning signs of fatigue

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Do you yawn often?
- ☐ ☐ Are your eyes tingling?
- ☐ ☐ Are you having trouble keeping your eyes open?
- ☐ ☐ Are you changing lanes without meaning to?
- ☐ ☐ Have you stopped checking the rearview and/or side mirrors?
- ☐ ☐ Are you experiencing periods of microsleep that last three to four seconds?
- ☐ ☐ Does your clothing feel tight?
- ☐ ☐ Are you feeling restless?
- ☐ ☐ Do your neck or shoulders feel stiff or cramped?
- ☐ ☐ Are you having problems concentrating, remaining vigilant?
- ☐ ☐ Are you braking at the last minute?
- ☐ ☐ Are you having problems maintaining a steady speed and keeping the vehicle on a straight course in your lane?

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Is your reaction time slowing down?
- ☐ ☐ Are you having trouble evaluating your speed and that of the other vehicles?
- ☐ ☐ Does the engine seem to sound louder now than when you left?
- ☐ ☐ Are you having memory losses?  
(e.g. you can't remember the last few kilometres driven)
- ☐ ☐ Are you seeing things that are not there, particularly when there is fog or on monotonous stretches of highway?  
(e.g. you think you see an animal on the road, or vehicles ahead or behind)



**Most drivers  
overestimate their degree  
of alertness and underestimate  
their fatigue... endangering  
themselves and others.**

**Act on the first signs  
of drowsiness! Pull over  
to a safe location as soon  
as possible, rest briefly,  
stretch your legs,  
take a nap.**



**Safe motoring!**

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**Société de l'assurance  
automobile**

**Québec**



**Road  
Safety**

*We are all responsible  
for our conduct on the road*